



# Missouri Pre-K Literacy Standards



# Introduction

The standards are broad descriptions of what most children should know and be able to do by the time they enter kindergarten. They are not a curriculum but a framework for communicating a shared set of expectations for preschool children in the field of literacy.

We realize some children will far exceed these standards; others will not enter kindergarten with the knowledge and experiences suggested in this document. Just as we recognize that different people bring different things to our society, we also recognize that variability in children is normal. The standards are not intended to be used to determine whether a child “is ready” to enter kindergarten. The standards are, however, goals for adults to use in supporting the literacy development of preschool children. Available evidence indicates that the standards are appropriate for most children.

The standards were developed by a broad-based group of individuals whose backgrounds are representative of many facets of the early childhood community in Missouri. The standards are intended to be used in a variety of early childhood settings by a variety of people—parents, parent educators, child care providers, Head Start and public/private school teachers, etc. They are consistent with current research and recommendations from other state and national initiatives.

It is our hope that the ultimate benefactors of this work will be our children, resulting in all children entering school ready to succeed.

## Missouri Pre-K Guiding Principles

1. All children actively seek to comprehend the world in which they live. Given the opportunity to make choices concerning their activities they acquire knowledge, skills and the ability to solve problems.
2. Children construct knowledge and values through interactions with peers, parents, other adults, and active exploration of the physical and social environment.
3. Young children’s thinking contains predictable errors.
4. Early learning and areas of development interact and influence each other.
5. Families (parents) are the child’s first and most important teacher(s).
6. Children exhibit individual differences in their development of competencies.

# Missouri Pre-K Literacy Standards

Content Component	Process Standards
Symbolic Development	Represents feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.
Spoken/Expressive Language	Uses language to communicate ideas, feelings, questions or to solve problems.
Listening/Receptive Language	Listens for different purposes.
Written Language	Uses writing as a means of expression/communication.
Knowledge of Print and Books	Applies early reading skills.
Sounds of Language (Phonological Awareness)	Attends to sounds in language.

**Process Standards** ..... Competencies in the process of literacy development.

**Indicators** ..... Milestones toward the development of competencies.

**Examples** ..... Observable behaviors children may exhibit in their literacy development.

**Guiding Principles** ..... Principles of child development that guide Missouri early childhood practices.

# Symbolic Development

*Represents feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.*



Indicator	Examples
1. Represents feelings and ideas through pretend play.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pretends to be a firefighter, doctor, mother, father, etc.</li><li>• cooperates during play with others (e.g. children work together to build a castle with blocks).</li><li>• creates play themes with others (e.g. “I’ll be the mommy, you are the baby and we will go shopping.”).</li><li>• attaches emotion to pretend play.</li></ul>
2. Represents feelings and ideas through movement.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pretends to move, run, jump, crawl, hop, skate, etc. like an elephant, airplane, dancer, bird, etc.</li><li>• expresses his/her feelings through movement (e.g. jumps with excitement, stomping feet in frustration).</li></ul>
3. Represents feelings and ideas through music.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• responds to different kinds of music (e.g. marches to music, relaxes to soft music).</li><li>• joins in singing favorite songs, saying rhymes, finger plays, etc.</li><li>• creates music and songs (e.g. changes words to familiar tune, plays pretend instruments).</li></ul>
4. Represents feelings and ideas through art and construction.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• draws or paints pictures and tells others about his/her pictures.</li><li>• builds with blocks, Lego’s, tinker toys, etc. and says, “I made a castle.”</li><li>• responds to others when asked to tell about a construction or a drawing.</li></ul>



# Spoken/Expressive Language

*Uses language to communicate ideas, feelings, questions, or to solve problems.*

Indicator	Examples
1. Communicates in home language and is understood by others.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses English, Spanish, sign or other native language for a variety of purposes.</li> <li>• communicates personal needs, preferences and feelings with language.</li> </ul>
2. Uses language to pretend or create.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pretends with words or actions to be a story/television character.</li> <li>• makes up rhymes or songs.</li> <li>• tells real or make believe stories.</li> </ul>
3. Initiates and responds appropriately in conversation and discussions with adults and children.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• asks and answers questions for information or to solve problems.</li> <li>• responds to how others feel and expresses concern.</li> <li>• shares information and gives directions especially during play.</li> <li>• engages in turn-taking conversations.</li> <li>• asks why, what, when, where questions.</li> </ul>
4. Uses complete sentences of varying length.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses descriptive language (e.g. color words, sizes, shapes).</li> <li>• experiments with and acquires new vocabulary.</li> </ul>

# Listening/Receptive Language

*Listens for different purposes.*



Indicator	Examples
1. Follows simple directions.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• can follow 2 step directions, “Put away your crayons and go to the door.”</li><li>• can follow 3 step directions, “Pick up your toys, brush your teeth, and put on your green shirt.”</li></ul>
2. Listens responsively to books and stories	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• responds to books and stories with facial and body gestures (smiling, laughing, etc.).</li><li>• responds verbally to the story or text.</li></ul>
3. Listens to and engages in conversations with others.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• responds appropriately to the words of another in an exchange of ideas, comments, or questions.</li></ul>
4. Responds to questions.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• can answer simple questions (e.g. What would you do if you fell off your bike and hurt your knee?).</li></ul>



# Written Language

*Uses writing as a means of expression/communication.*

Indicator	Examples
1. Experiments with writing tools and materials.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows beginning control of writing, drawing and art tools (e.g. uses a paint brush, pencil or marker with a functional grasp, uses dry-erase markers or chalk on board, uses tools for play-dough).</li> </ul>
2. Uses scribbles, shapes, pictures and letters to write.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>scribbles letter-like symbols and some letters in writing.</li> <li>writes something and then asks someone else to read it.</li> <li>attempts to write for a variety of purposes (e.g. lists, messages, stories).</li> <li>writes as a part of play (e.g. child says, "This is my grocery list.").</li> </ul>
3. Tells others about intended meaning of drawings and writings.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses writing to communicate ideas and information.</li> <li>says to a friend, during pretend play, "I am giving you a ticket, you are going too fast."</li> <li>uses symbols or drawings to express thoughts, feelings and ideas. Child may draw or "write" about an experience.</li> </ul>
4. Uses a variety of resources to facilitate writing.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may ask others for help in writing.</li> <li>attempts to copy letters or words from the environment (e.g. cereal box, names, public signs, logos, books, etc.).</li> </ul>



# Knowledge of Print and Books

*Applies early reading skills.*



Indicator	Examples
1. Shows interest in reading and books.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognizes and frequently requests favorite book(s).</li> <li>• chooses to “read” or look at books.</li> <li>• responds to and talks about the pictures in books.</li> </ul>
2. Exhibits book-handling skills.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holds a book upright and turns pages in the book, front to back.</li> <li>• begins to scan pages from top to bottom and left to right.</li> <li>• knows a book is for “reading.”</li> </ul>
3. Pretends to read easy or predictable books or tries to read along during his/her favorite part of story.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• joins in with predictable phrases (e.g. “Run, run, as fast as you can. You can’t catch me. I’m the Gingerbread Man”).</li> <li>• uses pictures and/or context to construct meaning.</li> <li>• may “read” beginning books, wordless books, familiar rhyming books, and/or predictable books by recreating the story from memory and/or picture cues.</li> </ul>
4. Responds to text.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies known objects in illustrations.</li> <li>• talks about or expresses emotion in reaction to text.</li> <li>• makes predictions and may use the pictures as a guide (e.g. “I bet he is going to fall.”).</li> <li>• uses the voice of a character (e.g. “Reads” text like “I’m the Mean Old Troll.”).</li> </ul>

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## Knowledge of Print and Books

*Applies early reading skills.*

Indicator	Examples
5. Reads environmental print and symbols.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognizes fast food and store signs (e.g. McDonald's, K-Mart).</li> <li>• recognizes product logos (e.g. Cheerios, Barbie, Lego's).</li> <li>• recognizes environmental signs (e.g. STOP, MEN, WOMEN, EXIT).</li> </ul>
6. Identifies some alphabet letters.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies some letters in his/her name.</li> <li>• may identify letters in other personally significant words (e.g. "c" for cookie, "d" for dog, "m" for mom).</li> </ul>
7. Recognizes that print represents spoken words.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognizes first name in print.</li> <li>• knows that the label "chair" on a chair means chair.</li> <li>• looks at words on the page of a book and "reads" the story.</li> <li>• recognizes that a letter is different from a word.</li> </ul>
8. Develops a sense of story.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tells a story from pictures.</li> <li>• recognizes variations in retelling of stories.</li> <li>• predicts outcomes of stories.</li> <li>• tells stories with beginnings, middles and ends.</li> <li>• dictates stories for others to write down.</li> <li>• tells stories based on personal experiences, imagination, dreams and/or stories from books.</li> <li>• recalls information about setting, characters, events in a story.</li> </ul>

# Sounds of Language (Phonological Awareness)

*Attends to sounds in language.*



Indicator	Examples
1. Repeats rhymes, simple songs, poems and finger plays.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• says or sings nursery rhymes such as Humpty Dumpty.</li> <li>• sings simple songs such as Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.</li> <li>• says poems and finger plays such as Itsy Bitsy Spider.</li> </ul>
2. Participates in word games.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• claps along with syllables of words (e.g. claps name and rhythms).</li> <li>• creates words by substituting one sound for another (e.g. “I like to eat...Apples and Bananas, Opples and Bononos” “Willoby, Wallaby Woo”).</li> <li>• participates in rhyming games (e.g. Going on a bear hunt and find something that rhymes with sock.).</li> </ul>
3. Discriminates some sounds in words.	<p><b>The child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attends to books that focus on specific sounds (e.g. JAMBERRY, FOX IN SOCKS, WHO’S IN THE SHED).</li> <li>• perceives differences between similar sounding words (e.g. “coat and goat”, “three and free”).</li> <li>• experiments with language sounds (like ssssssssnake, hisssssssss, buzzzzzzzzzz).</li> <li>• attends to some beginning sounds in familiar words (i.e. “That word begins like my name, David, dog.”).</li> <li>• plays with repetitive sounds (e.g. snakes slither, John Jacob Jingle Himer Schmitt).</li> </ul>

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*“Making a positive difference through education and service”*

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